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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-07 MC-02 IO-13
OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /101 W
----------087513 251313Z /41
P 251235Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4622
INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MPOL, ET
SUBJECT: MENGISTU STAGES IMPRESSIVE MILITARY REVIEW

SUMMARY: PMAC CHAIRMAN MENGISTU HAILE-MAIRAM PUT HIS NEW PEOPLE'S MILITIA FORCES ON DISPLAY FOR FIRST TIME JUNE 25 IN MASSIVE ALL-DAY MARCH THROUGH CITY, AFTER CEREMONIES WHICH BEGAN AT DAWN. THIRTY-DAY WONDERS, SOME 60,000 STRONG AND APPARENTLY WELL ARMED AND DRESSED, RESPONDED WELL TO MENGISTU'S EXHORTATIONS TO PATRIOTISM AND SACRIFICE IN ORDER TO DESTROY ETHIOPIA'S INTERNAL ENEMIES AND TO THWART EFFORTS OF HER ENEMIES ABROAD. WHILE EFFECTIVENESS OF MILITIA YET TO BE TESTED, THEIR PERFORMANCE TODAY MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THEY ARE FAR BETTER EQUIPPED AND PREPARED TO TAKE ON ANTI-EPMG INSURGENTS THAN WAS CASE DURING ILL-FATED RED MARCH CAMPAIGN YEAR AGO. END SUMMARY

1. AS OF 1300 HOURS, ETHIOPIA'S NEWLY FORMED PEOPLE'S MILITIA
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HAVE BEEN MARCHING IN REVIEW UNDER SUNNY SKIES THROUGH ADDIS ABABA FOR FOUR HOURS IN PROUD DISPLAY OF MILITARY MIGHT AND REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY. END OF PARADE NOT YET IN SIGHT, ALTHOUGH MARCHING UNITS HAVE BEEN BOARDING BUSES TO RETURN TO TRAINING CAMP FOR SOME TIME.

2. WITH DIPLOMATIC MISSION CHIEFS ATTENDING, CEREMONIES FOR

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"REGULAR FORCES AND PEOPLE'S MILITIA DAY" GOT UNDERWAY AT
0600 HOURS THIS MORNING AT OLD AIRPORT AREA OF CITY, WHICH
SERVED AS STAGING AREA FOR SOME 60,000 MEN AND WOMEN IN
UNIFORM, ORGANIZED INTO EIGHT MILITIA DIVISION. ARMED FORCES
CHIEF OF STAFF LT. GENERAL GIZAW BELAINEH ADDRESSED MASSED
FORCES BRIEFLY (TEXT NOT YET AVAILABLE). NEXT PMAC CHAIRMAN
MENGISTU PRESENTED FLAGS TO REGULAR AND MILITIA UNITS, AND
INSPECTED RANKS. HE THEN DELIVERED SHORT PATRIOTIC SPEECH,
DESIGNED TO CONVEY TO INTERNATIONAL PRESS REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT AND TO WORLD AN IMAGE OF OPTIMISTIC YOUNG REVOLUTIONARY
COUNTRY RESPONDING AS ONE MAN TO INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS
TO ITS UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. HE PAID TRIBUTE
TO MASSIVE RESPONSE TO CALL TO ARMS AND TO DISCIPLINE AND
ENTHUSIASM DISPLAYED BY MILITIA DURING NEARLY TWO MONTHS OF
TRAINING.

3. MENGISTU'S REMARKS WERE MORE MODERATE THAN ON PREVIOUS
OCCASION BUT HE EMPHATICALLY EXPRESSED EPMG DETERMINATION
TO CRUSH ITS ENEMIES IN ERITREA AND NORTH, WHICH WERE SUP-
PORTED BY REACTIONARIES AND IMPERIALISTS. NEITHER U.S.,
SUDAN, NOR ARAB COUNTRIES WERE MENTIONED AT ANY TIME. HE
WAS MOST CRITICAL OF SOMALIA, BUT CAST HIS CRITICISM LARGE-
LY IN TERMS OF EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE OF NEW
REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI. DESPITE MENGISTU'S RESTRAINT, RADIO
ANNOUNCERS KEPT UP RUNNING COMMENTARY THROUGHOUT REVIEW,
CONTAINING ACCUSATIONS OF MOST VIRULENT KIND AGAINST NIMEIRI
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AND SUDAN, SIAD BARRE AND SOMALIA, AND US AND ITS CIA AGENTS.

4. DIGNITARIES THEN DROVE TO REVOLUTIONARY SQUARE, WHILE
MILITIA UNITS, PRECEDED BY REGULAR ARMY FORCES, MARCHED 3
KM ROUTE TO STADIUM FLANKED BY CITY POPULATION, THIS TIME
CALLED UPON BY THEIR KEBELES TO SERVE AS SPECTATORS, RATHER
THAN MARCHERS. MILITIA WERE ATTIRED IN NEW UNIFORMS, AND ALL
WERE ARMED. ETHIOPIAN AIR FORCE CONTRIBUTED IMPRESSIVE FLY
BY OF US-SUPPLIED AIRCRAFT.

5. CURFEW WAS MOVED UP TO 2100 HOURS FOR NIGHTS OF JUNE 24
AND 25, AND CITY IS CLOSED TO ALL VEHICULAR TRAFFIC, EXCEPT
DIPLOMATIC CARS AND OFFICIAL VEHICLES WITH SPECIAL PASSES,
UNTIL 0500 SUNDAY. ALL IN ALL, MENGISTU HAS REASON TO BE
PROUD OF HIS ACHIEVEMENT IN MOBILIZING, TRAINING, AND ADE-
QUATELY ARMING NEW MILITARY FORCE ESTIMATED AT 100,000 MEN.
REAL TEST WILL COME, HOWEVER, WHEN THEY ARE DEPLOYED TO COM-
BAT AREAS OVER COMING WEEKS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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